

Giant cable companies should not be permitted to grow larger. Further consolidation in the cable industry is a clear violation of horizontal ownership rules that must be re-established to serve the public interest.

The concentration of power and control over distribution of media is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are under the operation of a handful of giant corporations.

If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market. This level of concentration in the cable industry will lead to higher consumer rates and

lower quality  
service.

Here in St. Albans,  
WV — since our  
local, \"small\"  
cable company was  
bought out by one of  
these giant, my  
cable rate has more  
then tripled. Yes,  
I do have more  
channels, but I also  
have little choice.

The pricing  
structures are such  
that in order to  
receive the few  
cable channels I  
want — such as the  
Sci Fi Channel or  
CNN, I must purchase  
many, many channels  
I never, ever watch  
— such as the Golf  
or Soap Channels.  
So, when Giant Cable  
assure me my cost  
per channel has gone  
down that may be  
technically true,  
except the cost to  
me for watching the  
TV I want has more  
then tripled.  
Enough is enough.  
You are supposed to  
act in my interest.  
Well my interest is

NOT served by making  
these giants even  
larger.

Oh! And the  
service? Horrible.

You'll want to  
chuckle over this  
one: One day, while  
watching the end of  
some movie, my cable  
went out.

Coincidentally (I  
thought) a TV cable  
truck was in front  
of my house. I  
pulled on my shoes  
and walked out to  
tell him my cable  
just went out, and  
since he was on the  
block, could he fix  
it? He looked  
puzzled and said,  
"Of course your  
cable went out.

That's what happens  
when you don't pay  
your bill or try to  
steal cable?"

"WHAT???" I  
screamed! We pay  
our bill. We have  
never had so much as  
a day late  
payment!" The  
cable guy duely  
called the corporate  
office first, and

\”Yes,\” they said,  
\”Disconnect 2718  
Lakeview St. Albans  
for non- payment.\”

I flew into the  
house and returned  
with my bank  
statement to prove  
the bill had been  
paid. \”At least  
for this past month.

If you like, I’ll  
dig up previous  
statements showing  
payment as far back  
as you like.\” The  
cable guy now called  
the local company  
(he had the magic  
local number — the  
number us local  
customers aren’t  
given.) and found  
(of couse) that the  
whole thing was all  
a mistake. Seems I  
had called the  
corporate  
headquarters the  
previous month to  
report a broken  
cable box remote. I  
already had received  
a new remote, but  
some corporate  
switchboard operator  
had keyed in to my  
account a numbered  
code that indicated

my service should be terminated for non payment.

Now... it does not seem that their error resulted in a lowering of our credit rating. But it easily could have — costing my family how much money and hassle?

From my perspective - if Giant Cable can\'t handle the customer load they have now without errors like this — why on earth do you think they should be allowed to get even larger?

I mean — put yourself in my shoes. Their procedures are so tangled and inefficient that some stupid clerical error could well have cost my family hundreds of dollars!

No they shouldn\'t get any bigger! Give people who are abusing their

franchise (remember,  
my monthly bill has  
more then TRIPLED)  
and endangering the  
public (reporting a  
broken remote  
results in a  
disconnect-for-nonpayment-or-cable-theft  
order) should not be  
rewarded for such  
poor service.

Local information?  
Oh come on ... Yes, we  
do have a channel  
that shills for  
local real estate  
offerings. And  
although our cable  
company does carry  
the local network  
affiliates, I still  
have little local  
variety.

But pretend James  
Madison were in the  
room. And ask him  
(in your head,)  
\"Mr. Madison, do  
you think it is a  
good idea to let 5  
companies control  
the 90% of American  
voters most  
easily-accesed  
information?\" Ask  
yourself honestly.

If your American  
History teacher was  
as good as mine you  
will find that your  
internalized Madison  
will answer. \”No,  
of course not!\”